

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The final Office Action dated January 31, 2007 has been carefully considered. Claims 2-7 are pending in the present application with claims 5 and 7 being in independent form. By the present Amendment, claim 7 has been amended to further clarify the features of the present application.

Claims 2-4, 6 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,927,820 to Vignotto et al. (hereinafter "Vignotto").

Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has substantially repeated the rejection of claim 7 set forth in the previous Office Action dated July 7, 2006. With regard to Applicants' previous arguments regarding this rejection, the Examiner contends that Vignotto describes an element 26 and a flange 13 that are integral with each other due to their pin connection via pin 38. The Examiner further refers to column 2, lines 50-54 of Vignotto as disclosing this feature. The Examiner notes that, while the element 26 is secured or added to the flange 13 by a pin, the pin couples the elements 26 and 13 together. The Examiner further notes that claim 7 merely requires that the projection and the fixed part of the wheel bearing be integrated, and thus, does not require that they be integral.

Claim 7, as amended, herein relates to a connection between a wheel bearing and a wheel carrier that includes "connecting elements . . . connecting the wheel carrier and a fixed part of the wheel bearing[] and at least one projection, formed integrally with at least one of the fixed part of the wheel bearing, the wheel carrier and the connecting elements. . . ." As the Examiner concedes, the element 26 of Vignotto is merely connected to the flange 13 by the pin 38 in Vignotto. Thus, the element 26 of Vignotto is not formed integrally with the flange 13.

In contrast, claim 7 of the present application requires that at least one projection is "formed integrally with at least one of the fixed part of the wheel bearing, the wheel carrier and the connecting elements." For example, Fig. 2 of the present application illustrates a protrusion formed integrally with the at least one fixed part. This embodiment is further described at page 4 of the specification.

Indeed, the Examiner's comments at pages 3-4 of the Office Action make it clear that even the Examiner recognizes a difference between the connection of two parts by a pin as is disclosed in Vignotto and the integral formation of two parts in one piece as is required by the present application.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 7 and the claims depending therefrom are patentable over the cited art for at least the reasons described above.

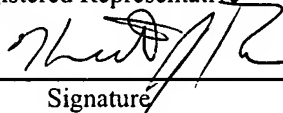
Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 5 is allowable. However, in light of the remarks and amendments made herein, it is believed that all of the remaining claims, including claims 2-7 are also patentable over the cited art and are in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration of the present invention is respectfully requested.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop A.F., Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on: April 30, 2007

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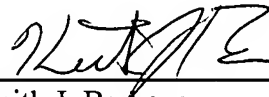


Signature

April 30, 2007

Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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